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ABSTRACT

The project investigated and developed assessment tools and instructional methods and materials appropriate for adults with learning disabilities who are students of English as a Second Language (ESL). The report summarizes the project's goals and results in four areas: assessment of learning disabilities; methods and materials for teaching ESL to the learning disabled adult; increased knowledge of the learning disabled, limited-English-speaking adult; and dissemination of the resulting information. The bulk of the document is in three appendixes. The first is a booklet designed to acquaint teachers with the problem of learning disabilities in the adult ESL student and with procedures for working with this population. It includes guidelines for screening and teaching the students and for selection of instructional materials. A brief bibliography is included. The second appendix contains the screening test developed as part of the project. The test consists of visual aids and score sheets to test for visual discrimination, visual-motor coordination, visual sequencing, visual figure-ground discrimination, word retrieval, receptive language, auditory comprehension, and sentence repetition. The third appendix includes a letter and evaluation form for field resource consultants involved in evaluation of the test. (MSE) (Adjunct ERIC Clearinghouse on Literacy Education)

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LEARNING DISABILITIES AND THE ADULT STUDENT OF ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

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LEARNING DISABILITIES
AND THE ADULT STUDENT OF
ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE

Final Project Report

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract..... 1

Introduction..... 2

Project Goals and Results..... 4

Evaluation..... 8

Conclusions and Recommendations..... 9

Appendix A - Booklet for Teachers

Appendix B - Screening Test

Appendix C - Evaluation Form

Information concerning the publication of this report and its appendices may be obtained from:

Illinois State Board of Education
Adult and Continuing Education Section
100 North First Street
Springfield, Illinois 62777

Abstract

After completing two special projects in the area of adult learning disabilities, William Rainey Harper College was awarded an adult education 310 project grant in the area of learning disabilities and the adult student of English as a Second Language by the Adult and Continuing Education Section of the Illinois State Board of Education. Project goals have included investigation into assessment tools and instructional methods and materials, testing and providing instruction for learning disabled adult ESL (English as a Second Language) students, and the dissemination of information gained from the project. The final report includes an account of the project, a learning disabilities screening test for adults learning English as a Second Language, and a booklet for adult education teachers on the subject of learning disabilities and the adult ESL student.

Introduction

During the summer of 1979, the Illinois State Board of Education, Adult and Continuing Education Section, funded a proposal submitted by William Rainey Harper College for the "Development of Assessment and English Language Teaching Techniques Serving the Adult Limited-English-Speaking Student with Learning Disabilities." The project began on August 27, 1979, and was completed on June 30, 1980.

This project followed two other projects in the area of adult learning disabilities, both of which were conducted at Harper College and funded by the Illinois State Board of Education. The first of these projects resulted in the writing of **The Problems of the Adult Learner: A Handbook for Teachers,**[1] which was written for Adult Basic Education (basic skills) teachers. Approximately one-half of this handbook addresses the subject of the learning disabled ABE student--how to recognize such students and how to provide learning experiences for them.

The second of these two projects[2] included actual basic skills instruction for a group of twenty-two learning disabled adults. A test for the assessment of possible learning disabilities in these adults was developed, and a program implementation guide was written to assist other ABE programs in instituting services for learning disabled adults.

As we were conducting the second project, it occurred to us that some of our students who were having considerable difficulty in English as a Second Language classes might be learning disabled. This realization led to our submitting a proposal for a project serving learning disabled adults of limited English proficiency.

The broad goals of this project have been the following:

1. To develop effective methods of determining whether a limited-English-speaking adult has learning disabilities affecting the acquisition of English as a Second Language

2. To develop methods and materials for teaching English as a Second Language to the limited-English-speaking adult with learning disabilities

3. To gain insight into the problems of the learning disabled, limited-English-speaking adult

4. To share with other adult education ESL programs information on providing ESL instruction for limited-English-speaking adults who are learning disabled

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[1]The handbook is available for $1.00 from the Curriculum Publications Clearinghouse, Western Illinois University, 47 Horrabin Hall, Macomb, Illinois 61455.

[2]The final report of this project, which includes the test and program implementation guide, is available for $4.00 from the Curriculum Publications Clearinghouse (See address above).

This project has been designed to address the needs of local ESL practitioners, namely classroom teachers, program specialists, tutors, and coordinators. Adult education program learning disabilities specialists will also find the project results of interest.

The principal work of the project has been completed by Jean B. Chapman, Project Coordinator and ESL Program Coordinator at William Rainey Harper College; Beverly Vaillancourt, Project Learning Disabilities Specialist and Learning Disabilities Specialist at Harper College; and Caroline S. Dobbs, Project ESL Specialist and ESL Department Faculty Member at Harper College.

We wish to acknowledge the able assistance we have received from the following persons: Jo Ann Fischer, Jane T. Chapman, Christine Freeman, Luz Hansen, Alicia Minard, Myong Schiestel, Bei Nguyen, Paula Ruiz, Victoria Rodriguez, Maria Silva, Elizabeth Hernandez, Angelita Wheeler, Nawanna Rodgers, and Ellen Austerlade (Harper College); Evangeline Misterous (Northeastern Illinois University Library); Joanna Escobar, Jeffrey Bright, and the field resource consultants (Statewide ESL/Adult Education Service Center); David H. Madsen (Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, Inc.); Frank Charles Dobbs and Seth Dobbs.

Project Goals and Results

1. Assessment of learning disabilities - In order to provide instruction tailored to the needs of the learning disabled, it is first necessary to determine if a student is learning disabled, and, if so, what particular types of learning disabilities that person has. Suitable testing instruments are needed in order to aid the process of establishing the presence and nature of a student's learning disabilities.

There currently are available several diagnostic tests for assessing specific learning disabilities. With the exception of very few, however, most tests are designed for, and thus have been validated on, children. Tests currently available for adults were judged unsuitable for a variety of reasons, including their content, test procedures, and format. The fact that an ability to understand and speak English is essential in order to take these adult tests is, of course, a major obstacle in using them for adults whose English skills are very limited or nonexistent. Thus it was necessary to develop a test specifically for adults who could not understand, speak, read, or write English.

Three major factors were taken into account in the design of the test. First, we wanted to test for those types of learning disabilities which would hinder the acquisition of basic English as a Second Language skills. Secondly, we felt it necessary to consider the multitude of cultural factors which inevitably would be brought by the student to the testing situation. One of the results of considering cultural factors was that we incorporated individual as well as group testing.[3] In this way failure in front of another person from the same culture (a terribly humiliating experience in certain cultures) could be lessened by having some group testing where individual tests are not reviewed until the students have left. Yet the one-to-one test situation which is essential for the determination of possible learning disabilities is preserved for part of the test. Finally, we felt that it was absolutely essential that the test be administered in the individual's native language,[4] for to administer the test in English would be in large measure a test of the individual's comprehension of English.

The test is based on standard learning disabilities testing procedures. The first part assesses perceptual skills, mainly in the visual areas. This is the section which may be administered to a group of students, all of whom speak the same language. The second part of the test assesses receptive and expressive language skills with an additional assessment of auditory memory and comprehension. There is also a test of word retrieval in this section. This second part of the test must be given individually. The entire test should take less than an hour to give.

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[3]When group testing is not feasible, this portion of the test may be given individually. It is possible to include individuals not suspected of having learning disabilities in the group test. Our students who took the test but had no learning disabilities actually enjoyed taking the test.

[4]The test itself uses pictures and figures. The instructions must be translated from English to the native language by an interpreter.

Individuals with limited learning potential (the so-called "mentally retarded") will most likely have trouble with most or all of the test. Since learning disabled individuals have average or above average potential for learning (They simply require instruction which takes their particular learning disabilities into account), it is necessary to administer an intelligence test to individuals suspected of having limited learning potential. Our choice for such a test would be the Culture Fair Intelligence Test,[5] which does not require English skills and can be given through an interpreter.

2. Methods and materials for teaching ESL to the learning disabled adult - Our conclusions on this subject appear in pages 7 - 9 of the booklet for teachers, which is Appendix A of this report.

3. Increased knowledge of the problems of the learning disabled, limited-English-speaking adult - Our specific objectives toward reaching this goal involved testing students having considerable difficulties in the ESL classroom and providing special one-to-one ESL instruction for those persons having difficulties with the learning disabilities test.

It was decided to administer the test to a number of beginning students who were not exhibiting any abnormal problems in the classroom before administering it to students identified by their instructors as having problems. In addition, the test was taken by two native speakers of English. This control testing brought out a few minor problems in the test which were then changed. This control group breaks down as follows:

Korean - 1
Hispanic - 7
Vietnamese - 4
English speakers - 2

There were some interesting results of this control testing. One Hispanic student exhibited a number of problems, primarily in the Visual Sequencing and Visual Figure-Ground areas. This indicates that the student will probably have trouble in learning to read. The problem had not become evident yet in the classroom as the instruction at Level 1 is primarily oral. This student, now in Level 2, is receiving one-to-one instruction to circumvent reading problems as she proceeds to higher levels.

The Vietnamese showed severe problems in receptive language. Further investigation brought out the fact that these students were ethnic Chinese, that their native language was Hakka, and that because of living in somewhat segregated enclaves in Vietnam, their command of Vietnamese was fair to poor. This episode reinforces the fact that the test is unreliable unless it is administered in the student's native language or dialect. No bilingual speaker of Hakka was available, so further testing of these students has not yet been possible.

A Chinese student was brought to our attention because of severe problems with spoken English--both in comprehension and speaking. He had remained at Level 1 for several terms without making progress.

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[5] Available from the Institute for Personality and Ability Testing, 1602 Coronado Drive, Champaign, Illinois 61820.

He was extremely discouraged and wished to return to China as his family was unhappy with him and a Chinese co-worker made fun of him because of his lack of progress in learning English. The learning disabilities test was administered to him but did not reveal any evidence of learning disabilities. It was recommended that he be given a hearing screening. This was done using a Maico Portable Audiometer. The results indicated several discrepancies in the student's responses, and a more thorough hearing screening has been set up.

Of the two other students recommended for testing by their instructors, one had already dropped out of the program when the test was ready for use, and the other has been involved with severe health problems and has not been available for testing.

There are several possible explanations for the small number of students who have been identified as having more than ordinary problems in the classroom and so recommended for learning disabilities testing. Learning disabled adults have already had much experience with failures in the areas which their disabilities affect. Consequently, they may not come to ESL classes in the first place so as to avoid further failure. They may start ESL classes but drop out when they feel they are failing again. If their problems are with reading or writing, they may stay in the program to gain as much oral proficiency as possible and leave the program when reading and writing skills become necessary. It is also possible that learning disabled individuals might be less likely to undertake the experience of coming to a new country, particularly if their families are not coming with them.

Another possible explanation is that **students with very minor learning disabilities can function in the ESL classroom because of the similarity of ESL methodology and that used with the learning disabled. Effective teachers of ESL for adults use multisensory, highly sequenced approaches with plenty of review. Such instruction should be of benefit to students with only minor learning disabilities.**

A final explanation is that in the Harper College adult ESL program one-to-one instruction has been available since 1975 for students experiencing difficulties in the classroom. We suspect that several individuals receiving this special instruction who left our program before the development of the test were quite possibly learning disabled. While these students were making some progress, the one-to-one teachers were concerned about their slow progress. Nevertheless, the one-to-one instruction probably enabled them to stay in the program. In the future we plan to administer the test to all individuals referred for one-to-one instruction who are having difficulties of unknown origin.

It would perhaps be desirable to mass screen to the extent possible all new students coming into the program in order to discover any learning disabilities problems that might exist. One-to-one instruction could begin immediately with any student suspected, on the basis of the test, to have learning disabilities. One-to-one instruction could carry such a student past the point of previous failures, and thus keep the student from dropping out. In large programs, however, this idea must perhaps remain only an idea.

4. Dissemination of information on this project - One of the objectives under this goal was to develop a booklet on learning disabilities and the adult ESL student and disseminate it to all adult ESL programs funded by the Illinois State Board of Education, Adult and Continuing Education Section. This proposed distribution of the booklet will take place at the discretion of that office. The booklet is otherwise available as Appendix A of this report, and the complete report, including the test, will ultimately be made available to all interested persons through the Illinois State Board of Education.

Evaluation

The learning disabilities test will be evaluated by the professional staff of the Illinois Statewide ESL/Adult Education Service Center for its suitability for use with adult ESL students. Copies of this evaluation will be mailed by the Service Center staff to the Adult and Continuing Education Section of the Illinois State Board of Education and to us.

The booklet developed for teachers will be evaluated by the field resource consultants of the Service Center, who are also local program practitioners. Copies of their evaluations will be mailed to the same office as above and also to us.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Our conclusions and recommendations appear in various places elsewhere in the text of this report as well as in the booklet and test instructions (See Appendices A and B).

Our project is only a beginning in an area that needs far greater exploration and development. We are pleased, however, to have "scratched the surface" in this complex area in the field of English as a Second Language instruction for adults.

APPENDIX A

BOOKLET FOR TEACHERS

ARE YOUR ADULT ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE STUDENTS LEARNING DISABLED?

This booklet was prepared at William Rainey Harper College, Palatine, Illinois, as part of a special project. Funds for this project were provided through Section 310 of the Adult Education Act, Public Law 91-230 as amended, and granted by the State of Illinois, Illinois State Board of Education, Adult and Continuing Education Section. The content of this material does not necessarily reflect the position or policy of the State of Illinois or the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. This booklet may be reproduced in its entirety by noncommercial agencies.

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What is the purpose of this booklet?

Any teacher who has taught several English as a Second Language (ESL) classes in an adult education (AE) program knows that there are some students, particularly at the basic level, who do not make progress in one or more of the language skill areas (listening comprehension, speaking, reading, and writing). At Harper College, after conducting two special projects in instruction for learning disabled, native-English-speaking adult basic education students, we realized that some of our ESL students who were having considerable learning difficulties might be learning disabled. A project to develop the means for testing and providing ESL instruction to such students was funded for the 1979-1980 school year by the Adult and Continuing Education Section of the Illinois State Board of Education.

This booklet has been developed as part of the project so that ESL/AE practitioners could be acquainted with the problem of learning disabilities in the ESL/AE learner and with suggested procedures to follow when working with students who have learning disabilities. Our project is only a beginning; there is an extensive need for more inquiry into this area.

What is a learning disability?

A learning disability is most often defined in terms of what it is not. It is not mental retardation, for a learning disabled individual has average or above average potential to learn. It is not emotional disturbance, though all too often underlying emotional problems compound the learning disability handicap. Finally, it is not a sensory impairment. A learning disability affects the brain's interpretation, understanding, and/or conveying of information. It can be specific, such as an individual's lack of adequate short term memory skills; or it can exist in clusters of disabilities, resulting in, for example, extremely poor language skills.

In 1968, the National Advisory Committee on Handicapped Children of the U. S. Office of Education adopted the following definition:

> (Individuals) with special learning disabilities exhibit a disorder in one or more of the basic psychological processes involved in understanding or in using spoken or written language. These may be manifested in disorders of listening, thinking, talking, reading, writing, spelling or arithmetic. They include conditions which have been referred to as perceptual handicaps, brain injury, minimal brain dysfunction, dyslexia, developmental aphasia, etc. They do not include learning problems which are due primarily to visual, hearing, or motor handicaps, to mental retardation, emotional disturbance or to environmental deprivation.

Today this is still the accepted definition of a learning disability. Learning disabilities are, without a doubt, a most perplexing handicap, resulting in failure to acquire specific skills, loss of self-esteem, low job status, and frequently a fear of further tries at education. It is essential to remember, however, that a person with learning disabilities can learn, given encouragement and carefully tailored instruction.

How can I know if an ESL student is learning disabled?

There are many factors which can inhibit or interfere with an adult student's acquisition of English as a Second Language. Many of these factors are psychological. Some students are coping with the problems of existing in an entirely new culture. Additional psychological stress comes from not being able to function as an adult in the new culture because of inability to speak the language. Simple things like taking a bus or buying food, taken for granted in their own countries, become severe problems in a new one. They may resent being put in the child-like position of being in a class where they feel the instructor knows the answers but they do not. Some students are uncertain as to the permanence of their stay here and consequently are not highly committed to learning English. Others may fear making mistakes and so will refrain from speaking in class except for producing what they already know.

Other factors which can inhibit progress in learning English are due to the nature of language acquisition itself. Recent research indicates that second language acquisition is somewhat analogous to first language acquisition. In other words, it is a process that takes time. A particular structure will not be readily retrievable for spontaneous use just because the student has studied it in class and has been able to produce it in a controlled situation. An ESL student in the process of acquiring English will probably continue to use incorrect forms part of the time and the correct English structures the rest of the time in varying percentages until the structure becomes completely correct in spontaneous usage. A good language learner will make every effort to communicate and will make mistakes in syntax and usage a great deal of the time. Like a child learning a first language, second language learners form hypotheses, test them, make guesses, have these hypotheses and guesses confirmed or disproved and thus add to their acquisition of English. Frequently, the learner forms an interlanguage--a transition stage between the old and the new--which enables him/her to function in English while the internalization process of language acquisition is going on. During this stage it may appear that the student is not making further progress in learning English. In addition, some students live and work mostly with others who speak their native language and because of lack of input in English take longer to make progress in it. Finally, many adult learners have physical problems with respect to hearing and/or vision.

Because of this large number of sources for problems in ESL learning, it can be difficult to determine the exact cause(s) of an individual's problems. With a suitable test, however, the ESL teacher can get an indication of possible learning disabilities. Because we were unable to find a suitable test for assessing learning disabilities in adult ESL students, we have developed our own as part of this project.[1]

When is the learning disabilities test needed?

The teacher may become aware that a particular student is having more than ordinary difficulty in one or more of the four language skills--**listening comprehension, speaking, reading,** and **writing. More than ordinary difficulty is indicated by a student's inability to make any, or very little, consistent progress in one or more of these areas.** Since learning disabled adults are often aware they have learning problems, they may exhibit avoidance behavior in the area of their disability. For example, a student who is very good orally may not complete writing assignments. It may seem to the teacher that the student does not complete the writing because s/he is too busy talking, but if this happens continually, it is possible that it is avoidance behavior for an inability to write. (It must also be taken into consideration that problems in reading and writing could be the result of illiteracy.)

In general, the teacher should watch for the student who does not seem to be making any consistent progress in a particular skill area or areas and who does not seem to remember from one class to the next what went on in the previous class. Such behavior exhibited over a period of time may indicate a learning disability.

Any student who is having more than ordinary difficulty with one or more of the four language skills should be given **vision and hearing tests.**[2] (Adults with physical problems have also frequently developed avoidance mechanisms.) The same student should also be given the learning disabilities test whether or not the results of the vision and hearing screening tests are negative because it is possible to have both sensory impairment and learning disabilities.

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[1]This test has been submitted as part of the final report on the project to the Adult and Continuing Education Section of the Illinois State Board of Education, 100 North First Street, Springfield, Illinois 62777. Information on obtaining a copy of the test can be obtained from that office.

[2]Such tests can often be obtained free or at low cost from clinics. In some localities the Lions Club offers these services.

It is preferable to give the vision and hearing tests before the learning disabilities test since severe sensory impairment could cause an individual to perform poorly on the learning disabilities test. Both vision and hearing tests and the learning disabilities test must be given in the student's native language or they will not be valid. Often an advanced student who speaks the student's native language[3] or a family member whose English is reasonably proficient may be asked to interpret.

How is the learning disabilities test given?

The test has been designed for use by any adult ESL program as it does not require the services of a learning disabilities specialist to administer. However, it must be administered to a student in the student's native language. The test is not valid if it is administered in any language other than the student's native language. Consequently, it is necessary to find a translator who is fluent in both English and the student's native language for each student tested. The directions for administration of each part of the test have been kept as uncomplicated as possible so as to minimize the translators' problems. The English-speaking teacher, counselor, or other qualified person must first go over the test with the translator to be sure that s/he understands what to do. The English-speaking person should remain with the translator throughout the test to help with any questions that may arise. The person administering the test should also be advised not to look at the student while s/he answers in order to avoid giving any nonverbal cues inadvertently.

The first part of the test (visual discrimination, visual-motor skills, visual sequencing, and visual figure-ground discrimination) can be administered to a group. It is better in some cultures to take a test as part of a group as it can be extremely humiliating to fail in front of another person, such as the tester, who is probably a member of the same culture.

Group testing, however, is not as productive as individual testing, so part of the test is designed to be administered individually. The parts to be individually administered are: word retrieval, receptive language, auditory comprehension, and sentence repetition.

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[3]In selecting an interpreter it is necessary to check very carefully on the native language (and sometimes dialect) of the student to be tested. Some Vietnamese speak a dialect of Chinese and may not know standard Vietnamese very well. Speakers of Cantonese Chinese usually cannot understand spoken Mandarin Chinese. Mexicans might have some difficulty understanding the speaker of Cuban or Castilian Spanish. These are just a few examples of the possible problems in finding suitable interpreters.

What is included in the test?

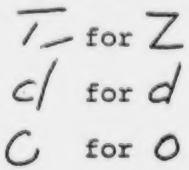
Visual Discrimination - The ability to rapidly discriminate visual input is essential for proficient reading skills to develop. The lack of this skill is prevalent among some individuals with specific learning disabilities. For these individuals, letters can invert (p for b), reverse (b for d), and rotate (n for u). Even within words, letters can transpose themselves, such as poeple for people. Words themselves can also be perceived incorrectly, such as was for saw, or left for felt. The key element here is that the perception of the visual information is incorrect. The sensory image is correctly received by the eyes, but the brain misinterprets the information.

The items of the visual discrimination test are presented in extended levels of difficulty. This simulates the developmental process of reading as one progresses from single words to phrase reading.

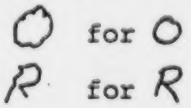
Visual-Motor Skills - The visual-motor test assesses the individual's ability to integrate what is perceived and interpreted visually with what is expressed motorically. As such, this test assesses a complex skill taken easily for granted. Individuals having difficulty in this area will show problems in learning the first motor skills of writing and copying.

The test items selected for the visual-motor test require the individual to be able to recreate both lines and circles. In assessing the individual's performance on this test, the examiner should look for the following problems:

☑ lack of closure among shape parts

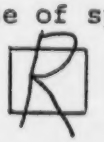


☑ lack of good fine motor control



☑ cramped use of space

☑ overuse of space



Visual Sequencing - The ability to visually sequence a series is especially important for individuals whose first language phonetic base varies significantly from English because they need to rely on visual rather than on auditory learning.

The visual sequencing test requires the individual to retain a sequence of letters shown to him/her. The individual then identifies the correct sequence from a choice of four possibilities. The items increase in difficulty from three to six letters.

Individuals displaying difficulty with this test would also demonstrate problems in spelling words that cannot be "sounded out," e.g., light, laugh, shine.

Visual Figure-ground Discrimination - The ability to distinguish the main figure of a visual scheme and not attend to its surrounding background is an important skill for successful reading. Individuals who are not able to do this have difficulty keeping their place while reading. Words and sentences seem to run together on the page.

The items of the figure-ground test proceed in difficulty from single letter tracking to phrase tracking of more than one letter. The time factor is added to more closely approximate a natural reading pattern as opposed to a study page. Many learning disabled individuals perform well on tasks when given additional time to achieve success. This need for more than the usual amount of time to complete a task should be noted.

Word Retrieval - Word retrieval is the difficulty of rapidly recalling to mind what one wants to say. The words are part of the individual's vocabulary but do not come to mind quickly enough. An individual with word retrieval problems has what is to be said "on the tip of his/her tongue" but just cannot seem to remember the word. This person may make great use of synonyms where a more appropriate word could have been used instead or may attempt to talk around the idea. Individuals with word retrieval problems would have obvious problems in learning a second language and in writing.

Receptive Language - Receptive language is the ability to understand what one hears. This requires intact auditory perception and memory skills. Another aspect of receptive language is rate. It just takes some individuals longer to understand what is said to them.

The receptive language test requires the individual to correctly identify a picture after listening to a sentence about the picture. The sentences are short; the ideas are non-complex. What is being tested is basic auditory receptive skills.

Auditory Comprehension - Auditory comprehension is a very complex skill. It requires the individual to correctly interpret what is heard, recall the information, build on what is heard by

association with other already learned facts, plus evaluate what was said. An individual displaying difficulty in this area could have problems in one or more of the components inherent in auditory comprehension.

The auditory comprehension test requires the individual to listen to a short story. The individual is then asked to retell the story. This adds the skill of expressive language. When an individual shows difficulty in successfully retelling the story, an effort should be made to find the point of skill breakdown.

Auditory comprehension is an essential skill for success in the development of good conversational skills. It is also essential for reading success.

Expressive Language - Sentence Repetition - Expressive language is the ability to relate through the spoken word. It requires the intactness of receptive and integrative skills. Some individuals with learning disabilities are able to understand but not express language. The problems may be in poor word recall, syntactic problems, grammatical errors, or a variety of other more complex language problems.

The expressive language test requires the individual to repeat ten short sentences. Where difficulty persists, specific problems should be monitored. These would include word order confusion, verb errors, the inability to repeat the entire sentence, or any other consistent pattern.

Individuals who evidence expressive language disabilities will have great difficulty conversing in a second language. These same individuals may understand what is spoken to them quite well though they may not be able to express what they want to say.

What methodology works best with the learning disabled?

If an ESL student is found through the test to have one or more learning disabilities, s/he needs to receive special ESL instruction.

Teaching methodology for learning disabled adults bears a certain similarity to ESL methodology. It requires a great deal of planning on the part of the teacher; it requires a variety of activities aimed at one global concept so that the same thing is approached in a variety of ways; it involves a sequential series of steps involving short-term, success-oriented tasks building to a long-term goal; and it requires the understanding on the part of the instructor that language acquisition is a process, not just a matter of learning facts, and, therefore, takes time.

The most successful approach in working with the learning disabled is one which capitalizes on the three major senses of sight, hearing, and touch. This multisensory approach assists the

learning disabled individual in compensating for any one area which may be particularly lacking in skills. Essentially, the multisensory approach enables the learner to see, hear, and touch a concept being presented to him/her. For example, when an English phoneme is presented to a student, the sound is said while the letter representing the sound is seen and traced.

One-to-one instruction is the most effective method of working with the learning disabled. Working one-to-one,[4] the teacher can be aware at all times whether the student comprehends or not and can shift direction whenever necessary. This is very difficult, if not impossible, to do in a classroom situation. Additionally, the area used for instruction should be as isolated and as distraction-free as possible. This is an especially important factor in working with the learning disabled.

Essential in instruction for the learning disabled is total learner involvement in the skill being taught. Most learning disabled individuals fail in a teacher-centered, lecture approach. They cannot be talked at but instead must be monitored constantly for their understanding. This requires continuous feedback from the learner in a give-and-take instructional setting. Moreover, the instructor must be prepared to find that each time the student comes for instruction, s/he will have forgotten much of what was done the previous time. The material from the previous session must be reviewed at the beginning of each session and then further expanded. At the end of each session there should be a recapitulation of that day's work.

It is important for the instructor to remember that **few learning disabilities are remediated.** The job of the teacher is to determine the strengths of the learning disabled student and to use these strengths to work around the problems so that learning can take place. This, of course, is not an easy task.

The ESL teacher will have a difficult time providing instruction for a learning disabled student unless s/he can consult with a learning disabilities specialist, preferably on a regular basis. Since the methods and materials a learning disabilities specialist would use to provide basic skills instruction to native speakers of English are, in most cases, not appropriate for ESL instruction, it is important that both a learning disabilities specialist and a well-qualified ESL teacher confer on the instruction, i.e., to provide appropriate instruction it is necessary to have knowledge of both the fields of teaching ESL to adults and of providing instruction for the learning disabled. The ESL teacher should have knowledge about working with the limited-English-speaking student and about appropriate ESL methods, techniques, and materials. The learning disabilities specialist

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[4]Volunteer or paid teacher aides or tutors who work under the guidance of the teacher may be able to provide this one-to-one instruction.

can advise the ESL teacher on how to interpret the learning disabilities test and on how to modify ESL methods, techniques, and materials to suit the individual learning needs of each learning disabled student.

In our view, any adult education program providing basic skills instruction (usually for native speakers of English) and ESL instruction should have a learning disabilities specialist on the staff or available as a consultant. In programs where this is not the case, ESL teachers will need to be resourceful and make their own contacts with learning disabilities specialists whenever possible.[5]

What materials can be used with learning disabled ESL students?

There are no ESL instructional materials available which are designed especially for learning disabled adults. Available ESL/AE materials may be used, however, if they are carefully selected and adapted.

As a basic textbook, we would choose English as a Second Language: A New Approach for the 21st Century published by ModuLearn, Inc. This text would need to be modified somewhat for one-to-one instruction but is written for adults, is sequential, presents material in small doses, and provides for review. Like any material used, it would have to be adapted and supplemented (remember the need for multisensory learning activities) with the learning disabilities of a particular student in mind. As an example, the phonics sections of the literacy materials accompanying this text would have to be avoided for a student with auditory discrimination problems.

Again, it is necessary for the ESL teacher and the learning disabilities specialist to confer. The ESL teacher needs to select materials that are appropriate in terms of what is known about adult second language acquisition, and the learning disabilities specialist must point out how the materials need to be adapted and supplemented for use with a particular learning disabled student.

Where can I get more information on this subject?

Interested persons may contact the ESL program coordinator at William Rainey Harper College, Algonquin and Roselle Roads, Palatine, Illinois 60067 (312/397-3000).

A bibliography follows.

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[5]Many school districts have learning disabilities specialists.

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Suggests that children can be dyslexic in only one language of two they are learning. Refers also to Makita article in that there is drop-off in difficulties in Chinese and Japanese as children progress from first to third grades. Not so in English-speaking children.

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Lewis, Richard S. The Other Child Grows Up. New York: Times Books, 1977.

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"It is proposed in this paper that the specificity of the used language is the most potent contributing factor in the formation of reading ability." Compares kana (one symbol for each sound) with Roman alphabet as used in English (26 symbols for 48 sounds) in discussing the minute percentage of reading disabilities in Japanese children.

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APPENDIX B

ESL/LEARNING DISABILITIES SCREENING TEST

ESL/LEARNING DISABILITIES SCREENING TEST

General Instructions

It is essential that anyone using this test read not only these instructions and the instructions for each part of the test but also the booklet for teachers and the narrative of the final report. The booklet and final report contain additional information pertinent to the administration of this test.

The test must be given through an interpreter or by a teacher/counselor bilingual in English and the native language of the student to be tested. The interpreter must be capable of making certain judgments about the student's use of the native language for the tests of word retrieval, auditory comprehension, and sentence repetition. Basically, it is the interpreter who will administer the test. The teacher/counselor, however, must first go through the test very carefully with the interpreter. It is essential that the interpreter understand exactly how to give the test. The teacher/counselor should remain with the interpreter throughout the test in order to give assistance and to answer any questions about test procedure. Finally, the interpreter should be asked to translate as precisely as possible and not to make any changes in the test procedure or questions.

Instructions for the individual parts of the test follow.

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Extra answer sheets may be reproduced by local programs.

29

VISUAL DISCRIMINATION

(Pages 1, 2 and 3)

Instructions to Tester:

Page 1:

1. Write the students' names and the date at the top of their pages.

2. Practice: Say to the students:

   "Look at the first row at the top of the page. There are some shapes. Circle the shape that is different." (After they have done this, put the practice example on the board and circle the u.)

3. Say to the students:

   "When I say 'begin,' look at the shapes in each row and circle the one that is different. Stop when I say 'stop.' Ready--begin." (Stop after 30 seconds.)

Page 2:

Say to the students:

"Now there are some groups of shapes. When I say 'begin,' look at the groups of shapes in each section and circle the one that is different. Stop when I say 'stop.' Ready--begin." (Stop after 30 seconds.)

Page 3:

Say to the students:

"Now there are 3 rows of shapes in each section. When I say 'begin,' look at the rows of shapes in each section and circle the row that is different. Stop when I say 'stop.' Ready--begin." (Stop after 30 seconds.)

VISUAL-MOTOR

(Page 4)

Instructions to Tester:

Say to the students:

"Now I have some shapes for you. When I tell you to begin, look at the shape in each box and make one just like it in the large space beside it. Ready--begin." (Stop after 2 minutes.)

VISUAL SEQUENCING

(Page 5)

Instructions to Tester:

1. Say to the students:

   "Now I am going to show you some shapes. After I take the shapes away, look at the top row of the page and find the same shapes. Be sure the shapes are in the same order. The first one will be for practice.

   "Look at these shapes." (Show syg card for 3 seconds. Remove syg card.) "Now find these shapes in the first row on your paper. Circle the same shapes." (Show syg again.) "Now look at these shapes again. Did you find the shapes on your paper? Are the shapes in the same order?" (Put the practice example on the board and circle syg. Check the students' papers for accuracy.)

2. Instruct students to cover page 5 with blank sheet.

   Say to the students:

   "Now I have some more shapes for you. Look at the shapes. When I say 'begin,' turn over the blank sheet and circle the shapes you saw. Remember to circle the shapes that are in the same order."

   "Here is number 21." (Show ozt for 3 seconds. Remove.) "Circle your answer." (When this is done, tell the students to cover page 5 with the blank sheet.)

3. Repeat step number 2 for numbers 22-28, allowing 1 second per letter. In other words, cbeift should be shown for 6 seconds.

VISUAL FIGURE-GROUND

(Pages 6 and 7)

Instructions to Tester:

Page 6:

1. Practice: Say to the students:

   "Now I have another set of shapes. Look at the shape in the top row. Now look at the line of shapes under it. When I say 'begin,' circle all the shapes in this line that look like the top shape. Ready--begin." (Stop after 5 seconds. Put the practice example on the board. Check the accuracy of the students' answers.)

2. Say to the students:

   "Now, when I say 'begin,' do the same thing for each shape. Ready--begin." (Stop after 20 seconds.)

Page 7:

1. Practice: Say to the students:

   "Now you have a group of shapes. Look at the shape in the top row. When I say 'begin,' circle each group of shapes in the line below that are the same as the group at the top. Each group of shapes should have the same order. Ready--begin." (Stop after 20 seconds. Put the practice example on the board. Check the students' responses.)

2. Say to the students:

   "Now when I say 'begin,' do the same for each group of shapes. Ready--begin." (Stop after 1 minute and 20 seconds.)

COLLECT THE TESTS.

WORD RETRIEVAL

Instructions to Tester:

Trial 1:

A. Have the small picture set and score sheet ready.

B. Show card #1 to student. Ask the student what is on the card. (You want essentially a one-word answer, for example: a ball, a cat.)

C. Write the student's answer in the native language on the answer sheet opposite #1 under Trial 1.

D. If the student does not answer within three seconds, put the card aside and do not use it again with this student.

E. Repeat steps A, B, C and D with all the cards.

F. When you finish, you may have two piles of cards:

   (1) the cards the student identified correctly within the 3-second limit

   (2) the cards that the student could not identify at all or within the 3-second limit. Keep only the cards in pile (1) for the next trial. DO NOT use the cards in pile (2) again for this student.

Trial 2:

A. Repeat steps A and B in Trial 1. Write the answers down on the score sheet under Trial 2, skipping the spaces for the cards discarded in Trial 1.

B. This time do not discard any cards that the student cannot answer within 3 seconds. Make a note on the test sheet if the student cannot answer within the time limit, and go on to the next card.

C. If the student identifies the same cards as s/he did in Trial 1 within the 3-second limit, the test is completed for this student. If the student cannot identify all of the cards s/he identified in Trial 1, complete Trial 3 and Trial 4.

Trial 3:

Repeat the procedures for Trial 2.

Trial 4:

Repeat the procedures for Trial 2.

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE

Instructions to Tester:

1. Have the large set of visuals and score sheet ready.

2. Say to the student:

   "Now I am going to show you some pictures. I will say something about one of the pictures. I want you to point to the picture I am talking about."

3. Show the student the pictures in Group I. Say sentence I. 1 (below). If the student points to the correct picture, put an "X" under "Correct" opposite I. 1 on the score sheet. If the student does not point to the correct picture, put an "X" under "Incorrect."

4. Repeat this process for all the pictures.

Sentences:

I. 1. He has a beard. (b)
   2. He doesn't have any hair. (a)
   3. He's wearing glasses. (d)
   4. He's wearing a black shirt. (a)

II. 1. She has a bird. (b)
   2. He's not wearing shoes. (c)
   3. There's a dog. (d)
   4. She's running. (a)

III. 1. It's a white car. (c)
   2. There are many cars. (a)
   3. There's a dog. (b)
   4. It's a black car. (d)

IV. 1. There's water. (a)
   2. It's winter. (b)
   3. It's a tree. (c)
   4. There's a boat. (a)

AUDITORY COMPREHENSION

Instructions to Tester:

1. Have the score sheet ready.

2. Say to the student:

   "I am going to tell you a short story. Listen carefully. After I finish, I want you to tell me the same story."

3. Tell the story once. Do not repeat anything.

Story

There was an accident at the corner of the street. A big truck hit a small car. The driver of the truck explained that his brakes did not work. A man in the small car was injured. The police took him to the hospital.

4. Ask the student to repeat the story. Listen for the following things:

   (1) Did the student repeat most of the story?

   (2) Does the student have any problems with his/her own language?

   (3) Did the student use complete sentences?

   (4) Did the student use the same words you used?

5. Ask the student to make a comment about the story. Write his/her answer in its English translation on the score sheet.

SENTENCE REPETITION

Instructions to Tester:

1. Have ready numbers 1-10 of the small set of pictures and the score sheet.

2. Say to the student:

   "I am going to show you some pictures. After I show you each picture, I will say a sentence about it. After I say the sentence, I want you to repeat it."

3. Show the student picture #1. Say sentence #1 (below). Ask the student to repeat it. If s/he repeats it perfectly, put an "X" in the "Correct" column after sentence #1 on the score sheet. If s/he cannot repeat the sentence, put an "X" in the "Incorrect" column. Do this for each sentence.

Sentences:

1. It's a pencil.
2. This is my bicycle.
3. I sit on the chair.
4. The blouse is soft.
5. Each hand has five fingers.
6. The boot is made of leather.
7. I lost a sock.
8. The airplane arrived late.
9. This is a nice house.
10. Fruit is good for you.

Practice

nnunn

1

dbddd

2

pppqpp

3

ggpgg

4

iliiii

5

pyfz	pyfz
pfyz	pyfz

6

moqr	mqro
moqr	moqr

7

nmou	nmou
nmou	umon

8

pofoz	fopoz
fopoz	fopoz

9

dpmox	bqmox
dpmox	dpmox

10

mop bog fiw smop

mpo dop fiw smop

mop bog fiw smop

11

soy pft miy

soy qft miy

soy pft miy

12

s op fgy moptz

s op fgy moptz

s po fyg moptz

13

tmoxy om fymxight

tmoxy om fymxight

tomxy on fymxgiht

14

sq dmp ox fyaip

sq bmp ox fayip

sq dmp ox fyaip

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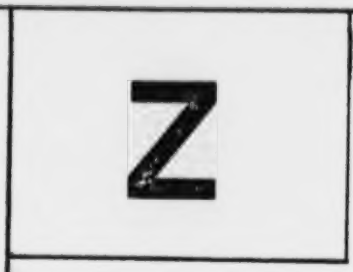
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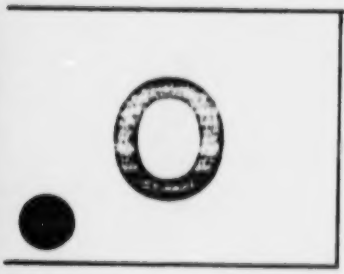
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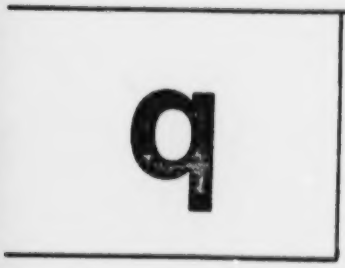
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R
20

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cover sheet

Practice

syg gys sgy ygs

21

tzo toz zto otz

22

siq isq sqi qis

23

saxf sfax

axfs fxas

24

rgda radg

dagr adgr

25

praox arpxo

oxpra opxra

26

xraojp poajrx

jpoarx pjoarx

27

luimpr lumpir

lmuipr mulipr

28

bcieft cbeift

ceibft cebift

Practice

b

cbofbijbnvbgdfxsbrd

29

m

nomwxmrfsmwunm

30

g

gmpfbgrqrgocdmgq

31

u

vunpmuocumocmu

32

f

frtspfmftrtontf

Practice

myz

pftmyzzmfmpmyzpymtzymzmyz

33

sxg

osgsxgpyfmxgosxggxsgtsxggtsx

34

spog

spogyspoyfoususposspoggxpogspog

35

fxyph

xypfxyphmxptfxfxyphphofxyphoyxp

36

tsmopai

tsmoptsmopaitmposaibxtsmopai

WORD RETRIEVAL TEST SCORE SHEET

Name_____ Date_____

	TRIAL 1	TRIAL 2	TRIAL 3	TRIAL 4
1.				
2.				
3.				
4.				
5.				
6.				
7.				
8.				
9.				
10.				
11.				
12.				
13.				
14.				
15.				
16.				
17.				
18.				
19.				
20.				
21.				
22.				
23.				
24.				
25.				
26.				
27.				
28.				

# of pictures not identified in last trial _____ (= #incorrect)

RECEPTIVE LANGUAGE SCORE SHEET

Name_____ Date_____

	Correct	Incorrect	Comments
I.	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
II.	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
III.	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		
IV.	1.		
	2.		
	3.		
	4.		

Number Incorrect_____

AUDITORY COMPREHENSION TEST SCORE SHEET

Name_____ Date_____

	Yes	No	Comments
1. Did the student repeat most of the main points--accident, big truck, small car, man injured, police took him to hospital?			
2. Does student have any problems with own language? If answer is "Yes," give details.			
3. Did student use complete sentences?			
4. Did student use the same words you used?			
5. Write the student's statement in its English translation. Is it meaningful?			

The correct answer for #1, 3, 4 & 5 is "Yes."

The correct answer for #2 is "No."

Number incorrect_____

SENTENCE REPETITION SCORE SHEET

Name_____ Date_____

	Correct	Incorrect	
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			

Number Incorrect_____

Name _____

RESPONSE RECORD

Date _____ ESL Level _____

Native Language _____

Interpreter _____

	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
1-VD			
2-VD			
3-VD			
4-VD			
5-VD			
6-VD			
7-VD			
8-VD			
9-VD			
10-VD			
11-VD			
12-VD			
13-VD			
14-VD			
15-VM			
16-VM			
17-VM			
18-VM			
19-VM			
20-VM			

	Correct	Incorrect	Comment
21-VS			
22-VS			
23-VS			
24-VS			
25-VS			
26-VS			
27-VS			
28-VS			
29-VFG			
30-VFG			
31-VFG			
32-VFG			
33-VFG			
34-VFG			
35-VFG			
36-VFG			

Word Retrieval: # incorrect _____

Receptive Language: # incorrect _____

Auditory Comprehension: # incorrect _____

Sentence Repetition: # incorrect _____

SCORING

One incorrect on any indivdiual test - WARNING FOR THAT AREA

Two incorrect on any individual test - PROBLEM IN THAT AREA

COMMENTS:

Practice

otz

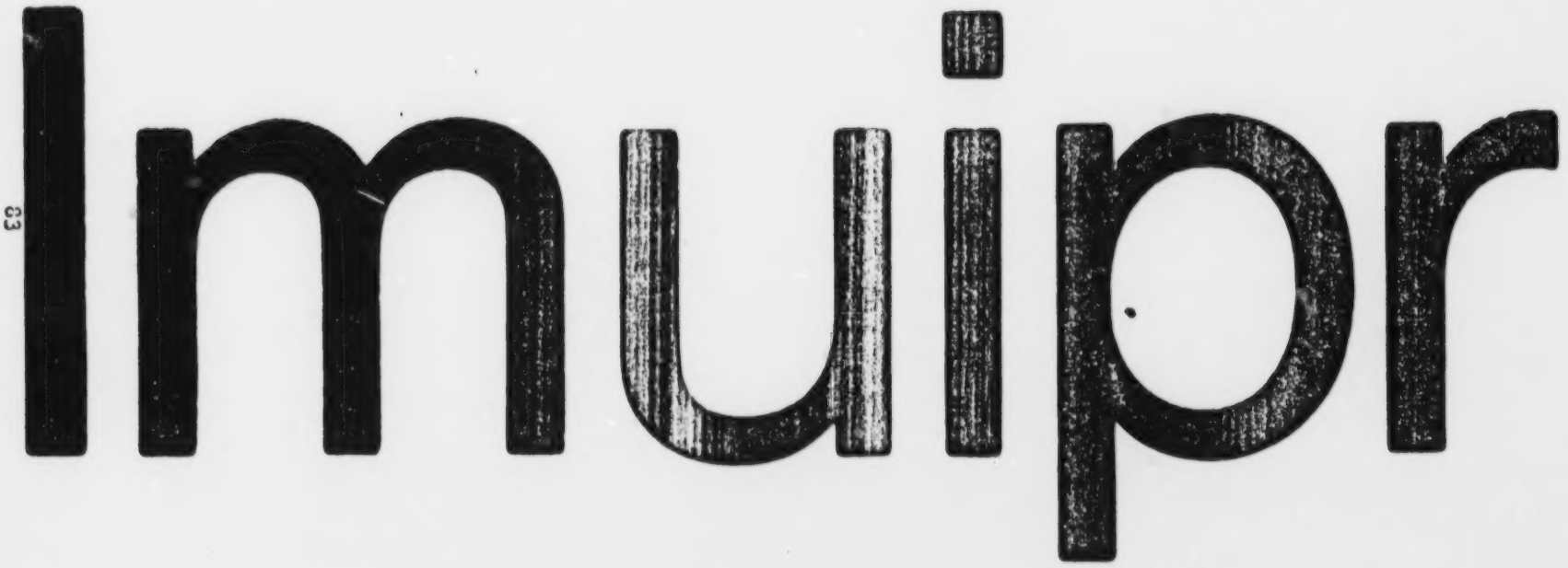
sqi

sfax

radg

oxpra

pjoarx



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cbeift

I

a

b

c

d

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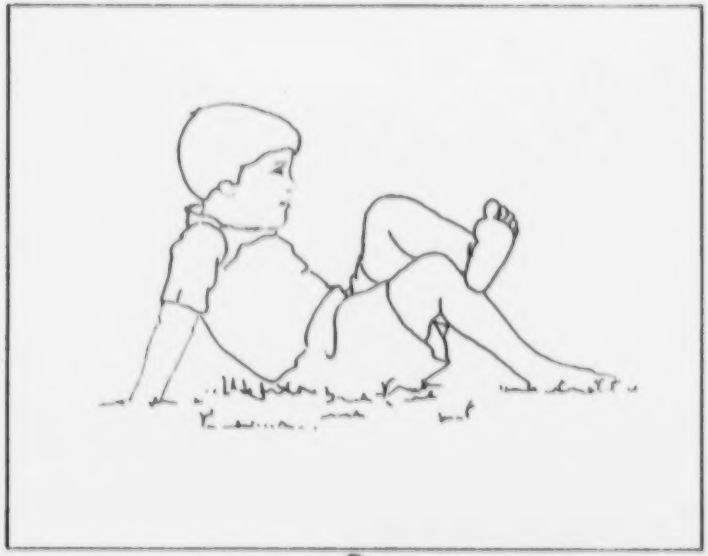
64

65

II

a

b



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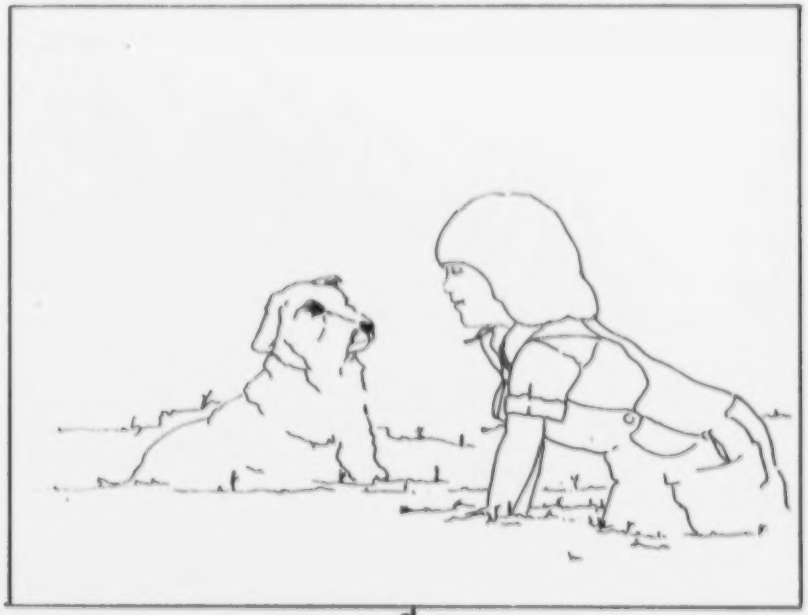

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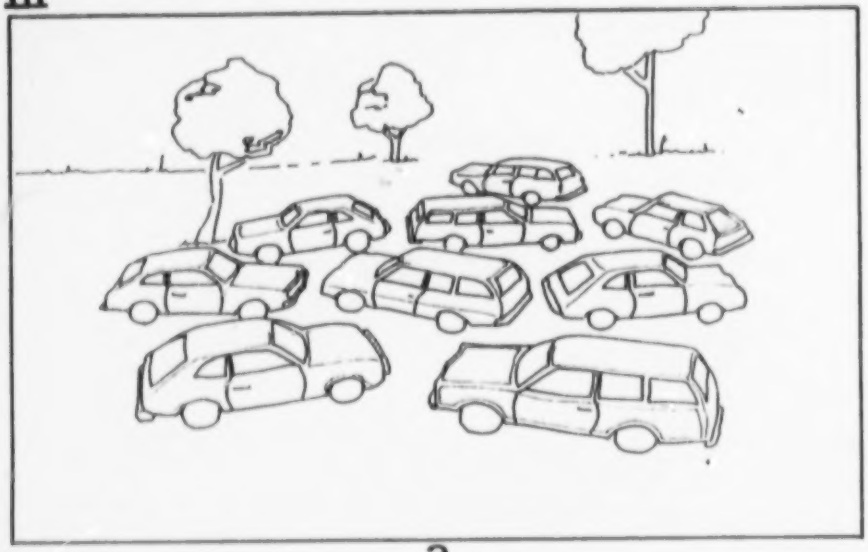

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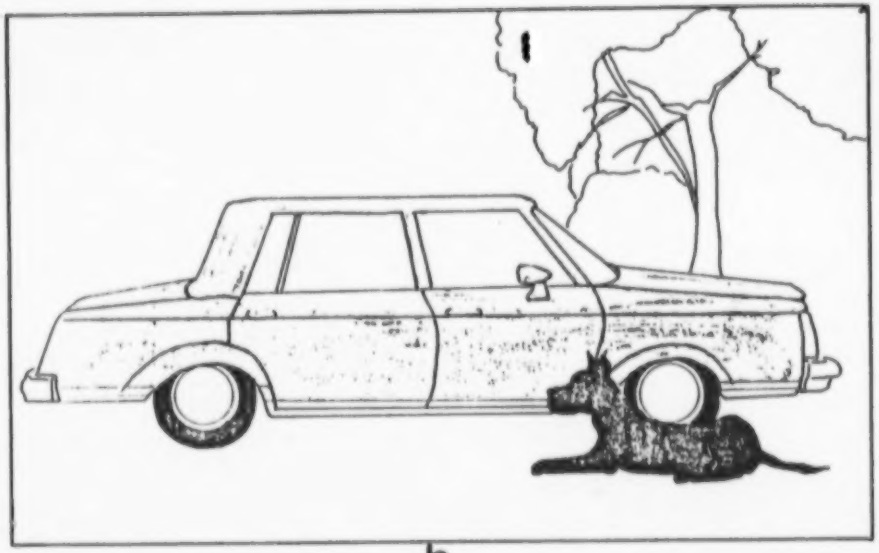

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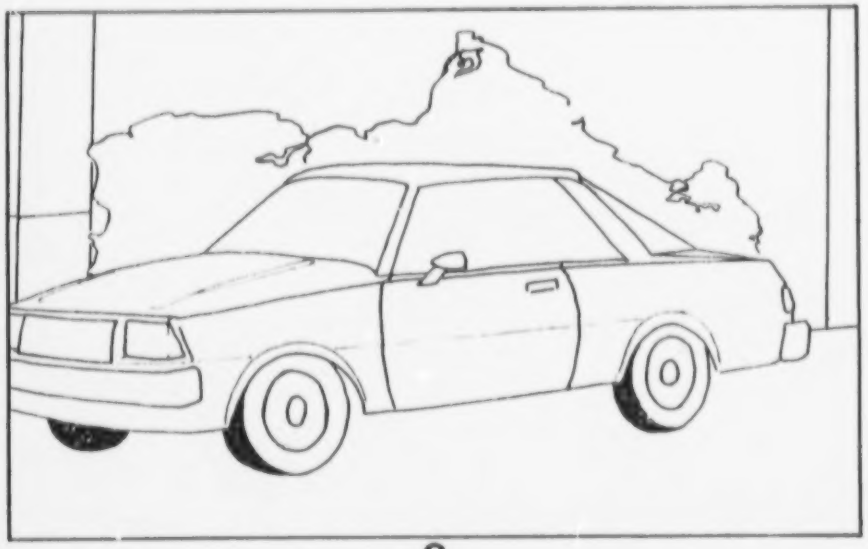

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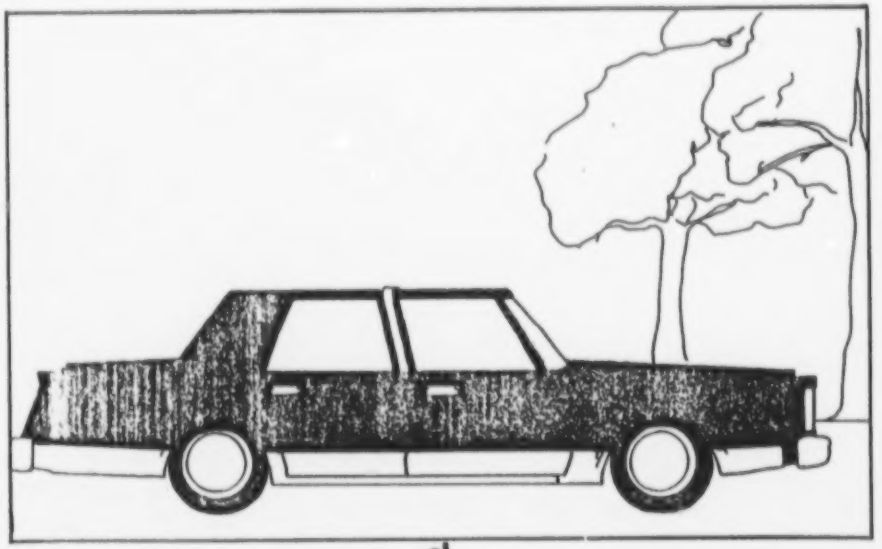

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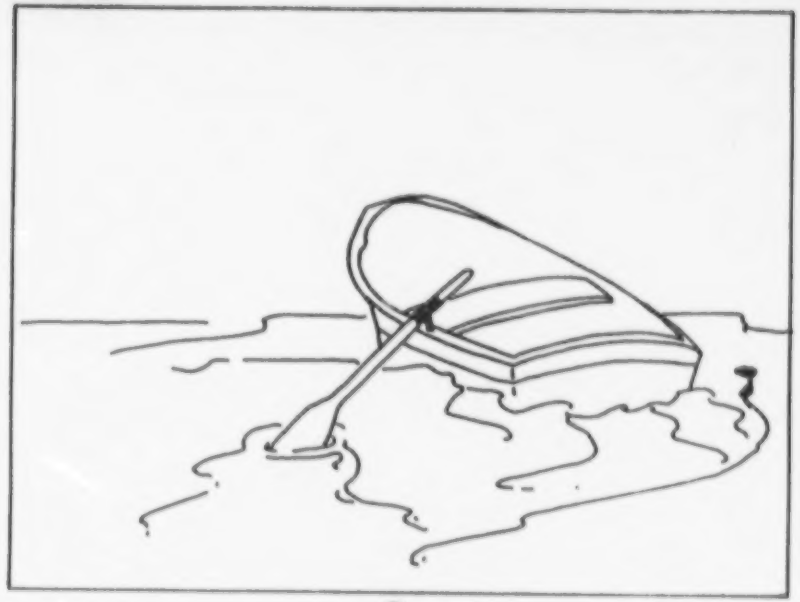
IV



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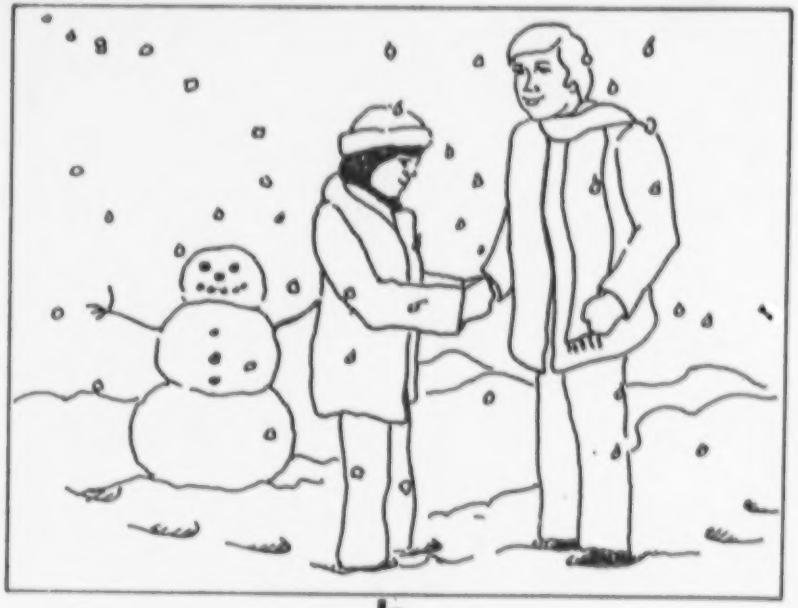

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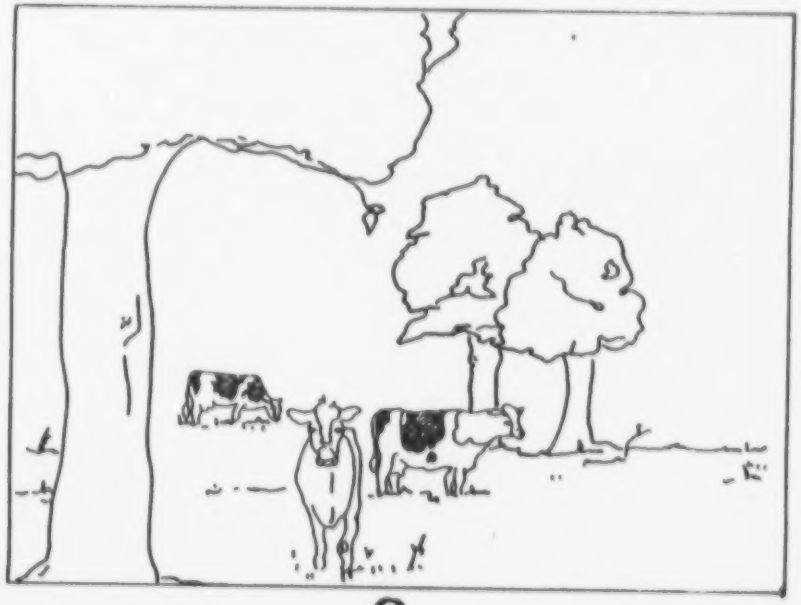

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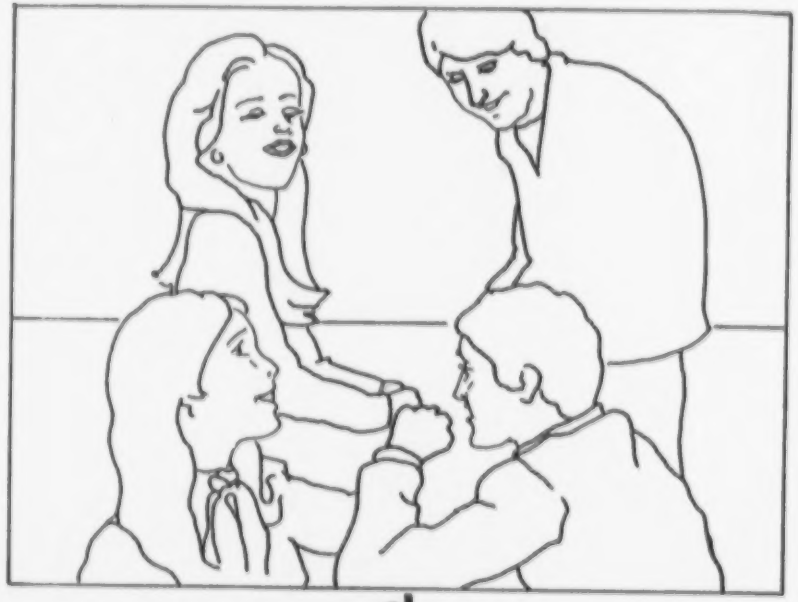

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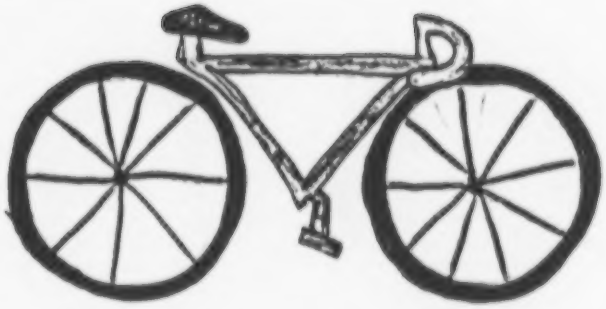

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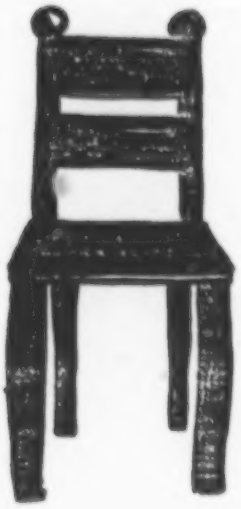

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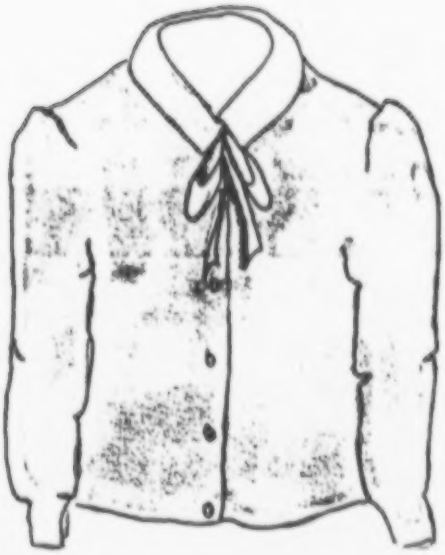

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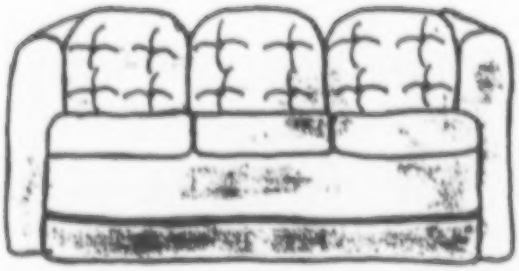

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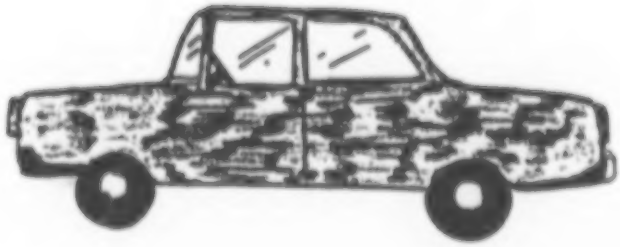

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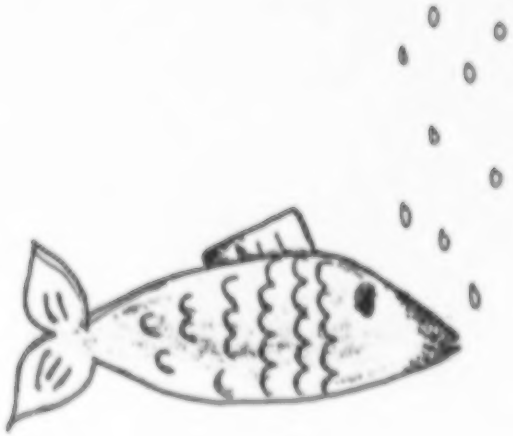

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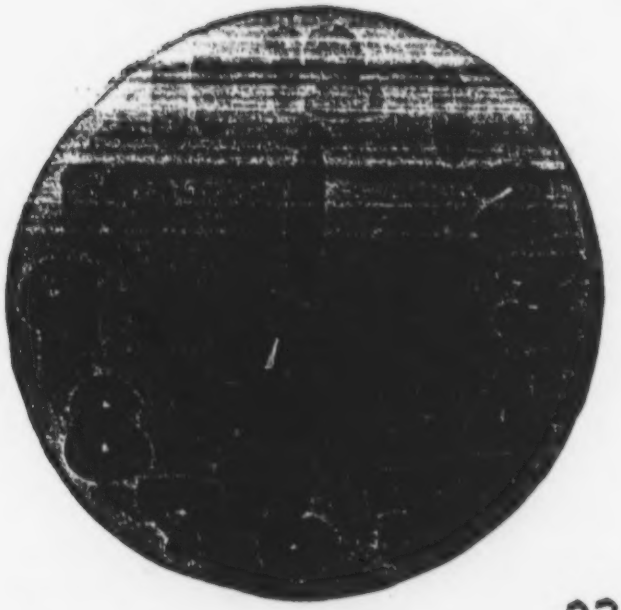

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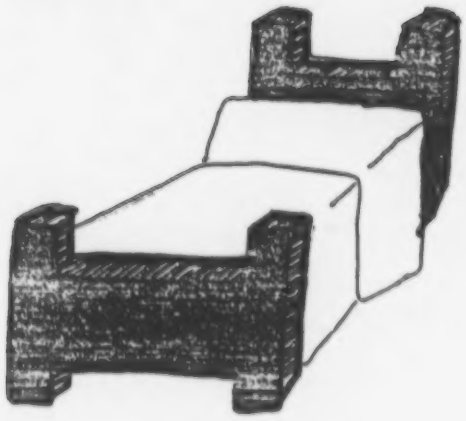

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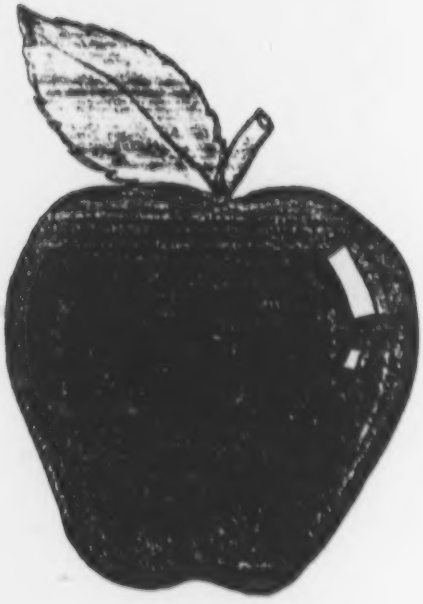

28

APPENDIX C

LETTER AND EVALUATION FORM FOR FIELD RESOURCE CONSULTANTS

William Rainey Harper College
Algonquin and Roselle Roads
Palatine, Illinois 60067
312-397-3000

July 10, 1980

Dear

You are receiving this letter because you are one of the field resource consultants of the Statewide ESL/Adult Education Service Center.

About a year ago, the Harper College ESL Program submitted a proposal to the Adult and Continuing Education Section of the Illinois State Board of Education (ISBE) for grant funds to conduct a special project in providing ESL instruction to learning disabled adults of limited English proficiency. At that time we approached Joanna Escobar, Director of the Center, on the possibility of asking the field resource consultants to evaluate a booklet for ESL teachers which would be written as part of the project. Joanna agreed to this arrangement; our project was funded; and we are now at the point where we are requesting your evaluation of the booklet.

The principal goals of the project have been to develop a test which might assess possible learning disabilities in the ESL learner; to identify appropriate methods, techniques, and materials for the learning disabled ESL student; and to develop a booklet giving ESL teachers guidance in identifying learning disabled students and providing instruction for them.

We would very much appreciate your taking a few minutes to read the booklet and to make an evaluation of it on the enclosed form. We would appreciate also your making a "xerox" or carbon copy of your evaluation so that copies may be mailed both to ISBE and to us. Stamped envelopes addressed to ISBE and to us are enclosed. The ISBE copy needs to be in Springfield by July 31.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Jean Chapman

Jean Chapman
ESL Coordinator

EVALUATION OF HARPER COLLEGE 310 PROJECT

ESL/LEARNING DISABILITIES BOOKLET

Directions: Please rate the booklet in terms of each of the statements below by placing an "X" on the line under "Good," "Fair" or "Poor."

	Good	Fair	Poor
1. This booklet helps the ESL teacher to understand what learning disabilities are.	____	____	____
2. The booklet helps the ESL teacher to understand how learning disabilities might hinder an adult in learning English as a Second Language.	____	____	____
3. The booklet gives the ESL teacher adequate guidance for determining when a student should be tested for learning disabilities.	____	____	____
4. The booklet provides an adequate rationale for each of the parts of the test.	____	____	____
5. The booklet provides adequate guidance to the teacher on how to provide ESL instruction for learning disabled students.	____	____	____

Comments: _____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

(Optional) Name of ESL/AE Service Center field resource consultant